

ENGLISH AS FIRST LANGUAGE VS ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Before the inception of imperialism of the American, the British had incessantly colonized, most of the impoverished nations. Despite the invincible atrocities monopoly, English gradually emerged as a common medium of communication. In the 21st century, we have seen the widespread growth of English medium schools in our country, whereby the English is taught as First language. This evidently signifies the preference of English over one's own mother tongue and also the dialect. In regard to the consciousness of these prevalent culture and social heritage, this often arouses controversies. As a result many people could not differentiate between the native language and foreign language form of English and often one get more preference than other in wrong environment. However, as it is an undeniable fact that English is a globally accepted language, so we should understand the difference between English first language and English second language and the importance of both of them.

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INTRODUCTION

In 21st century, English is the most speaking language in the world. It is the most accepted international language and billions of people speak English in current time. English language has two forms – English First Language or Native and English Second Language or English as foreign language. Many countries use English as their native language or mother tongue, and many countries use English as a foreign language. But now days, in many non native English speaking countries, people become unable to differentiate between English first Language and English second language. This confusion hampers both the English language ability as well as the native language of the nation. Also, in our country there are many hindrance of spreading the ability of speaking English among common people. So, we should be aware of these linguistic problems and take necessary solutions.

WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

A language is a communication system which includes sounds and words by which a person can express his/her opinion or any statement. By, Language we can communicate, express emotion and even show our idea in front of others.

WHAT IS FIRST LANGUAGE AND SECOND LANGUAGE AND WHY THEY DIFFER?

The language, which is learnt after birth through communication with surroundings, is called native or first language. A baby learns his/her first language from parents or relative by

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constantly later life also, he/she uses the native language fluently without thinking about its grammar.

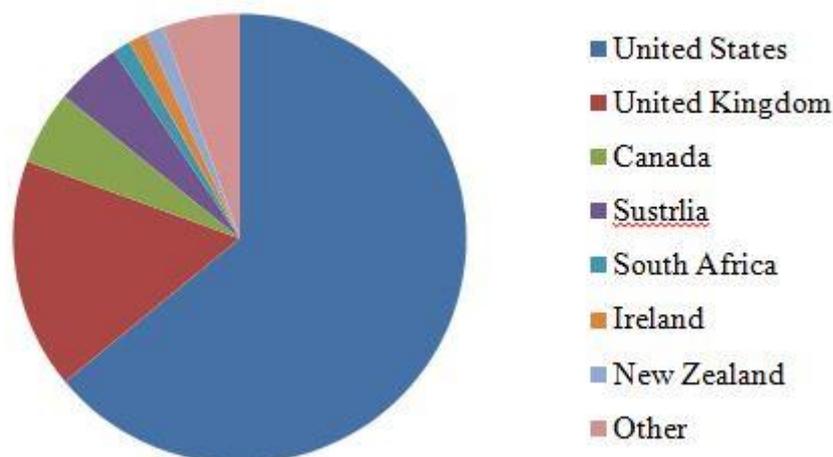
The language which is learnt much after mother tongue learning is called second language.

When anyone learns second language the person also learns grammar rules and many other concepts and so in later life when he/she speaks the second language he/she takes care of the grammatical rule of the language and this makes the fluency of second language lesser compared to that of first language.

ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD

Approximately 330 to 360 million people speak English as their first language. With 258 million, the United States has largest native English language speaking population. 60 million native speakers are in United Kingdom, 19 million in Canada, 25.1 million in Australia, 4.8 million in Ireland and 4.8 million in New Zealand. All the native English speaking countries together are called Anglosphere.

English as Native Language



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Approximately 470 million to 1 billion people speak English as second language. Including native and non native, English becomes the most spoken language in the World.

India has the world's second largest English speaking population (125 million) just after United States.



■ States and territories in which English is the first language of the majority of the population.

■ States and territories in which English is an official, but not the majority language.

CONFUSION BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE

In the modern world, though communication has been advanced many people do not give proper importance to their first language and second language. Unless a person becomes good in his/her first language, he/she cannot be well acquainted with other language or second language

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So, we cannot tell that English First language or English second language is better than other in general. In a native English speaking country, English First Language is far more superior, and there is no question about English second language. But, in other countries people should give his/her attention to the native language, then to English. Here, we must know a point that taking English as a second language never means that our English will become weaker than native English speakers. A person can be equally good to his/her native language as well as English language.

Today, in our country many schools not only follow English as first language but also neglect the importance of our original native language or first language. This system actually hampers our English language, because our ability in our original first language, will decide out ability in English language.

In teaching a foreign language, the proper and judicious use of mother tongue proves of immense help. The English language which is assumed as a foreign language is taught in an artificial environment and most importantly the influence of mother tongue is more than any language because it is the only medium of communication a new born first gets accustomed to without any knowledge of its surroundings. Even now, students are taught most of the subjects in their curriculum in their native language and English in some specified class which means even now some institutions have kept English as the second language. Actually, the use of mother tongue as first language creates a feeling of security and atmosphere of relaxation conducive to learning. On the other hand it is also argued that linguistic arrogance is a hindrance towards learning English, besides keeping in mind the importance of knowing and using mother tongue judiciously. The interesting fact is that if one cannot interpret situations or thoughts or emotions in his own native language it's no good doing that in some other language. As majority of the schools hail from rural areas, bilingual method is adopted

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in language classes. If a student is unable to understand something in English it is the native language that is used for explanation.

CAN ENGLISH BE REALLY FIRST LANGUAGE IN OUR COUNTRY?

A person learns his first language during childhood before gaining full consciousness. So, that language takes a very special place, because it is language “acquisition” (learning language unconsciously without thinking about grammar and construction). In the later life, whenever that person learns another language that language can never replace or take the place of first language. So, in a non-native English speaking country, even if a person know English very well and his/her English ability is close to his ability in first or native language, it can never equal to his/her native language.

Native language is bearer of the culture of a nation. If a nation loses its native language, then it will lose its history and past. Like, in the past ancient Egypt used to be a great nation with its glorious culture, but after taking Arabic language as native language their ancient culture is started to be demolished and now in Egypt the ancient Egyptian civilization only is a history. So, we should maintain our native language as well as English language simultaneously because though English connects us with the world, our mother tongue nurtures our society and culture.

**IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN OUR COUNTRY
AND THE CURRENT SCENARIO**

Today’s world is interconnected with each other. So, it is very necessary to have a common language for international conversation. English language fulfills this purpose as an international language. Even within our country, English is used as the language for all

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official purposes. English is playing major role in many sections like education, medicine, engineering and business.

In the present scenario it may have been noticed that significant number of English medium schools have been pioneered all over the country, the convent schools, being majorly at the zenith, as per statistics. However, unfortunately, things are taking a turn for the worse.

English as a language is insufficiently developed in most of the government schools in most of the states in India. The irony is even after spending 10 to 12 crucial years of their lives in learning English language, most of the students are not fluent or confident enough to communicate in English. Strikingly, the same heritage of functionally illiterate learners in English is passed on to the colleges even. Moreover, the higher authority only looks up to scoring decent or extraordinary marks and thus the teachers are caught in the mire as whether to complete the syllabus or improve the techniques of teaching English language to the learners.

It is astonishing to note that when the English language has obtained a global status as an essential mode of international communication we have to cope with the fact that English learning still needs to be rejuvenated, particularly for speaking and listening purposes.

Howsoever learning English has been facing a major setback in the recent past. This is the reality, however, prior to independence, not only in India but also in the other nations that were relieved from the British colonialism in the 20th century. The subjugation of the British culture had undeniably created patriotic masterminds and it was this English language that unified the common masses then. But now the situations drastically changed because of several reasons that ended up not even in learning the native language properly. Actually the loophole lies over here that needs to be emphasized. The deteriorating consequences are due to the lack of proper teaching methods of languages in schools and also because of lack of

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awareness among parents to groom their children in such a way that their children must grasp their mother tongue foremost before they switch over to English language.

Our native language is obviously important, but we should not forget about English. Being a foreign language, it is necessary to grow our ability in English. According to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own.”

NATIVE LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARE NOT ENEMIES

In the precious discussions we have seen that, in native English speaking countries, English language is enough to serve their purpose of holding the culture of the nation as well as intra and international communication. So, in those countries English First Language is fine.

But, in non-native English speaking countries, like our country India, both native language and English are equally important. Native language holds the culture and society and English connects the country with the rest of the world. So, it is necessary to maintain a balance between these two. Neglecting native language and making English as first language will not make the situation better. So, in our country, it will be best if English is treated as second language keeping native language at its own original place.

Keeping English as second language does not mean that all the English medium academic system will be removed. A proper balance in between native language and English language will make improvement in both English medium academic system and ability in native language.

At last, we have to accept the fact that English is the international communication language.

So, after acquiring native language, it is our duty to learn English also to break the linguistic

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hindrance in the world and it is also the duty of the government and every citizen of our country to strengthen the infrastructure of learning English language for sake of the progress of our country.

CONCLUSION

It is not possible to tell that English first language is superior to English second language or vice-versa in all countries and nations in a stereotypic way. The acceptable form of English varies from nation to nation depending on the culture, society. But, if English is a foreign language to us, then we should keep a balance between our mother tongue and English language to enjoy the benefits of both and avoid any linguistic problems. And also to cope up with the world, it is very necessary to progress the English education in our country.

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